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A
BONE to PICK

Recommended to the several
Water Companies of this Metropolis;

Or a Check to

Avarice, Tyranny and Oppression;

In two P A R T S.

Part the First

Being an authentic, or genuine Account, what Steps the Author hath taken to withstand the Rapacity of a certain Water Company, as addressed to some particular Gentlemen under their judicial Capacity, touching their Conduct and Proceedings in this Business.

Part the Second

Contains two Letters to the above Company, respecting the rapid and unreasonable Advance of their Water-Rents; also relating to their arbitrary and uncivil deportment towards their Customers.

Lastly,

A Friendly Address to the Public (in some measure) stating the trifling Expences of the Water Companies when compared with their excessive Profits; by which the Community may form a shrewd guess, whether imposed upon or not.

But this Address is principally intended as an encouragement to a more public and particular Inquiry into this matter; and at the same time to persuade the oppressed to unite in shaking off such tyrannical yoke.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the Author, 1790.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

26

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

W. H. COMPAGNIES OF THE METROPOLIS

OF THE CHURCH

AVANCE, T. VERNY and O. P. B. N. 1

THE PARTS



One in two letters to the new Company, respecting the rapid and unobtainable advance of their work. Hence, the relating to their activity and activity in a steady towards their Company.

A letter to the new Company, to the effect that the Company, in the future, will be responsible for the rapid and unobtainable advance of their work. Hence, the relating to their activity and activity in a steady towards their Company.

But this Address is principally intended as an encouragement to a new public and particular industry into this matter, and at the same time to persuade the Company to come in aid of such industry.

LONDON

Printed by the Author, 1790.

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To the READER,

Let not this weak attempt, by Critic's Eye be scan'd
 Regard not so much th' words, but weigh the Writer's hand;
 Or rather mark the sole and pure Intent,
 Whereon his thoughts are thus so strongly bent.

AS these Lines are intended for public good, I humbly hope that the same Public, or whoever may be so condescending as to peruse them, will in candour overlook any incoherencies therein contained, especially as the Author doth not pretend to lay claim to a liberal education. No, very far from it.

For although my Father was a person of some property, he on the other hand had many children to provide for; his views were principally fixed on doing the best in his power for them, but at the same time he had no manner of idea of there being any kind of necessity of his running himself to an extraordinary expence in our learning, which is the less to be thought of, as we were brought up in a country place, in one corner of Staffordshire; a part where grammar was, at that time, but very little understood, or sought after by the bulk of the people, much less was any other, more than our native tongue considered as necessary; however, my father

gave us all an education in a common way, what he thought sufficient to carry us thro' life; to wit, we were instructed in reading and writing, and at the same time taught to understand something of arithmetic.

But as far as I can recollect the best Preceptor that I ever had the advantage of being under, never troubled himself or his pupils about the different parts of speech, or any thing of the kind; but on the other hand his chief aim was to teach us to spell correct, to keep our stops, and to read in an audible proper way.

As to penmanship he was nothing extraordinary himself, what he did write was with his left hand, he being lame on the other; but however this defect was pretty well made up by his supplying his scholars with copperplate copies; with respect to figures, he understood common vulgar arithmetic very well, and had a very good method of teaching it; but, as to any thing farther, viz. decimals, &c. I never knew him to make any pretence to.

Having thus voluntarily laid open the barrenness of my education, I humbly hope that all such as may so far condescend as to favor me with their attention to the matter, that they will at the same time the more freely
and

and generously pass over any improprieties or defects therein, whether it be some places that may appear dull and flat, or perhaps in others in the awkwardness of the style: But above all must beg your patience and pardon for having sometimes inserted or repeated the same particulars in different parts of this work; but this could not well be avoided in conformity or consistent with the plan I proceed upon, of laying before my friends and fellow sufferers, the various steps I have from time to time taken, in order to have gained redress without thus troubling you. This being considered, I trust my worthy and respectable readers will, in candour, pass over all such inconsistencies, rather observing the interest they have in the subject, than the uncouthness or the insignificance of the writer.

A subject this of such consequence that there are but few families of any note in this metropolis, but what are interested therein.

I very readily and willingly acknowledge that it would have been by far more becoming a person of greater abilities to have taken up the cause, as such a one might have set it off in a more proper and striking manner: But where shall we meet with a person of learning and consequence, that would wish
to

to take the field against these opulent, and of course powerful bodies of people, let their proceedings be as culpable as may be; at least it doth not appear to me that any such hath taken up the matter against them; if so, I hope that a candid and discerning public will easily forgive a hand so mean obtruding himself upon them in this business, especially as his aim is for their general good; and farther as he attempts it chiefly with a view that some other person or persons that are better able, and better qualified for such affairs, may step forward and second him therein; for otherwise there can be but little hopes of its being of much service either to himself, or to the Public at large.

That the profits of these gentlemen upon their Water is in general, or at least for the most part very excessive (I had almost said incommensurable) should suppose any intelligent person, whether interested therein himself or not, if he reads what is laid down in the following sheets, and considers the matter but ever so superficially, but what must be convinced of the certainty thereof.

But this is not all, their arbitrary and insolent behaviour to their customers, with their unfeeling measures of enforcing compliance to their unreasonable and unjustifiable demands

demands is, I should suppose, another powerful incentive or spur to induce or to rouse people out of their lethargy, and to bring them to a sense of their duty as well as interest, in humbling the pride of these gentlemen.

That the Author hereof hath experienced such treatment in a high degree from the Shadwell Water Company is an undeniable fact, which will more particularly appear in the former part of this treatise, which kind of usage as far as I understand, is their general way or manner of proceeding with any such as do not think well, tamely to submit to their tyrannical yoke.

Whether the other Water Companies act after the same haughty, odious, and tyrannical manner, will undoubtedly soon appear, if a proper enquiry or investigation of the matter be set on foot. However, be this as it may, respecting the behaviour of these other gentlemen towards their customers, they as far as I perceive are altogether if not more exorbitant in their charge, than what this Eastern Company above spoken of have hitherto arrived at: Nevertheless these latter gentlemen, to wit, the Shadwell Water Company, if I mistake not according to their rapid advances

advances of late years, bid fair in a little time to equal, if not to out-top any of their brethren, if some check is not put to their proceedings.

Have one thing to observe, which is this, namely, that I have taken some pains to gain the little knowledge I have of the subject; and I think I may well or assuredly say, that I have been so cautious as not positively to advance or assert any one thing but what is strictly true.

Whether the other Water Companies act after the same haughty, odious, and tyrannical manner, will undoubtedly soon appear, if a proper enquiry or investigation of the matter be set on foot. However, be this as it may, respecting the behaviour of these other gentlemen towards their customers, they as far as I perceive are altogether if not more exorbitant in their charge, than what this Eastern Company above spoken of have hitherto arrived at: Nevertheless these latter gentlemen, to wit, the Shadwell Water Company, if I mistake not according to their rapid advances

(9)
Part the first

To Messrs. Mc I—H, and such other
Gentlemen whom this may concern, COMMIS-
SIONERS of the COURT OF REQUESTS for the
TOWER HAMLETS, London.

"Facts are stubborn things."

SIRS,

MOST likely you may little expect to hear
from me respecting the subsequent subject,
I mean the dispute which hath lately happened
betwixt me and the Shadwell Water Company,
which although I could not conveniently take up
before, as being otherwise too much engaged;
nevertheless can by no means think of dropping
it.

Well knowing it would not only be acting en-
tirely inconsistent with what I have from time to
time intimated to the above despotic gentry,*
particularly in a letter I addressed to them, bear-
ing date June the 24th, 1788, wherein I very
evidently made it appear that their demands upon
me were exorbitant, unreasonable, unequal and
unjust, but they paid no manner of regard to these
things, as they not only rejected the offer I there
B made

* Be not surprized at the epithet, for I am bold to declare
that I shall be able fully to clear it up before I have done,
that they are worthy of it, and much more.

made, and the cautions I gave them, but also soon after this, they put their former threats, (viz. of cutting off my water) in force; being, if I mistake not, a conduct as mad and impolitic, as their other proceedings were unreasonable and unjust; but they most likely being as it were swoln with pride, and the thoughts of their own importance, might think it beneath them to pay any regard to the homely dictates of a plain and poor individual; I say it would not only be acting contrary to what I had there intimated to them, but should be wanting to myself and family the duty I owe to their High and Mightinesses, and to the public of this metropolis at large, were I to let such arbitrary base proceedings pass without further notice.

But you may ask why I trouble you with this business, or what concern you have therein; I answer much every way as Commissioners of the Court of Requests, where the above respectable gentlemen cited me several times, and for the most part I was obliged, through your instrumentality, to submit to their demands, right or wrong (excuse the expression, for I believe I shall be able to make it appear by and bye, that there was but little equity therein) and not only me but all or most likely nearly all such disputes which happen in the East part of the metropolis, must of necessity fall under the decision of the above Court, from whose award there is no appeal.

As such the conduct of you Gentlemen Commissioners, in your proceedings become greatly involved in this business, consequently it is morally

rally impossible to attempt any thing with the above arbitrary gentry, without bringing your transactions forward at the same time; for here lies the only, or at least the first and principal ground or foundation the Public have for seeking out for ways and means of redressing themselves, as I told these gentlemen in plain terms in the above letter, after having spoke of said Court, seemingly not being able to mitigate these matters according to reason, equity, or justice, you having declared over and over time after time, that you have not power to fix a price upon other person's property.

According to which doctrine, if they were to impose ten times as much as they do upon their Tenants or Customers, or if they assess them ever so unequally and tyrannically, it must still be all the same, you would not have it in your power to redress any one, consequently it must be high time for the public to seek for ways and means of redressing themselves.

This being strictly and truly the case, I thought it but right to make application to you gentlemen first of all, that you may have a fair opportunity to reply to any part where your proceedings are called in question, if you think well so to do.

I would here observe to you, that I have two things principally in view, the one to endeavour to clear myself from that calumny which my antagonist the Company's Collector, took such care
time

time after time in open Court, to asperse or bespatter me with, namely, that I would never pay without being forced to it.

A very good reason should suppose I had for so doing; a matter this of such importance in its nature to society, of making a stand against arbitrary despotic power, which in my humble opinion (although it may be deemed by some not right of me so far to decide on such point myself) nevertheless will venture to say that it appears to me so far from having any manner of criminality scandal or infamy therein, that should suppose it, or such like things, rather ought to be ranked amongst acts of heroic virtue; albeit would rather wish to leave it to the decision of a candid public, whether such conduct is not more deserving of applause than censure or blame; for where or what would mankind soon degenerate into, if no one had public spirit and fortitude enough sometimes to withstand such unjust, unequal and unreasonable demands as these Despots insisted upon; I say would not Englishmen in this case soon sink into the very lowest, or most abject state of slavery of any people in any parts of the known world.

This leads me to the second and principal point which I have in view, namely, not only to open the eyes of the public, in proving to them, or at least many of them, how egregiously they are Afs-ridden and imposed upon, but also to open the eyes of the above despotic Gentlemen themselves, to teach them better manners to their custom-

customers,* and if possible to bring them a little within the bounds of reason; moreover here is one affair which I could wish of all things to be serviceable to them in, viz. it hath been signified to me time after time, that they are troubled with by far too many customers; I had this information first from a Mr. J—n W———ll, when he was Secretary to the said gentry some years back, but more positively and particularly from (I had almost said) their tool and collector Mr. E———n, as we met at the above Court of Requests, in consequence of 'my never paying without being forced to it,' as noticed before; this being the third time, and was on Tuesday the 8th of April, 1788, when after the above business was over, as we were coming out of Court, I intimated to him that I thought it might be of service to his masters to ease them of about 19 out of 20 of their customers; to which he answered and said, that such a thing would be of very great service to them; consequently they must or will be greatly obliged to any person or persons that may be able to bring such matters to bear.

But I would not wish to be here understood that I mean, barely to level at the Shadwell Water Company, but rather, to endeavour, to sap the very root or foundation of that base, vile, fordid, I had almost said Diabolical Combination, which if not misinformed, several of the Water Companies

* Alluding to their High and Mightinesses ordering me out of their presence like a Dog, on the 20th of Sept. 1787, which affair will be more particularly spoken of by and bye.

Companies have so meanly dastardly and shamefully entered into, for that avaricious, wicked, detestable and cruel purpose, of obliging their Customers to pay just whatever they may think fit to impose.

I must here acknowledge that I have a very sensible feeling of my weakness or inability, for such undertaking, nevertheless; I can with safety affirm this much, that although my power is small, that my intentions are good. I also know that a very trivial spark may enkindle a large fire, and also that great things have arose from small beginnings, and who knows but what some person or Persons, that are better able and better qualified for the purpose may take up the cause, but I humbly hope on the other hand, that in case I should fall short in bringing said matters about, that these Gentlemen which I am so desirous to serve, will be so kind as to excuse me, therein generously accepting the will for the deed.

These heads being laid down, must now make bold to recall to your minds; your own proceedings relative to the above dispute as therein arises, the first and principle ground (as above observed) for the Public, seeking for ways and means of redressing themselves.

And be it known that I entered upon my House No. 179, Ratcliff Highway, in the Parish of St. George's, Middlesex, about Christmas in the Year of our Lord 1772, which House was at this time supplied with water by the Shadwell Water Company, at the rate or rent of ten shillings per year,

Year, which I paid them from Year to Year, and don't remember to have heard any thing of the water being underrated, until the Year 1777, about which time if I mistake not, the Shadwell Company got the West-Ham Works into their own hands, (this is the blessed effect of monopoly) and probably the above detestable combinations might take place about this time. However be these matters as they may, I was now advanced from ten to fourteen Shillings per Year, which continued until Midsummer 78, at which time they tacked another Shilling per Year to my water Rent, which different advances, I submitted to without much scruple. I was continued at this Rent for Water, viz. at 15 shillings per year until Christmas, 1785, viz. six years and a half.

But these gentry not yet satisfied, are now seemingly determined to attempt, or rather to enforce a farther advance (and that a tolerable round one upon their tenants) according to which determination they gave the under-written modest notice, as I find it upon my Receipt for the above last half-year's Rent, and printed with red ink withal, as it might not escape the eye, viz.

“ The Shadwell Water Company give this
 “ Notice, that on Account of their very great
 “ Expences and Losses, they cannot serve their
 “ Tenants with Water at the very low Prices
 “ which they have hitherto received.—And that
 “ from Christmas, 1785, there will therefore be
 “ an Advance on the Water-Rents.”

They

They say on account of their very great expences and losses ! but what proof do they give of either ?—proof did I say—alas ! why should I mention, or even attempt to mention such an obnoxious word ; as most likely it would be as difficult a task for them to perform, viz. to prove that their expences and losses were any way adequate to their profits, even at this very time that they give this notice, as it would be for them to find the longitude.

Therefore they very wisely take a much shorter and easier method ; they boldly assert, and who of their tenants dares be so hardy as to call what they say in question ; whoever does, may depend upon it, that he will incur their High Mightinesses sore displeasure, and he may expect that vengeance will soon follow, by their cutting off his Water. What doubt the veracity of these Gentlemen ! No no, by no means, for we must rather take their ipse dixit for matter of fact, at all events, right or wrong, no ways suspecting, or at least no ways objecting to what they say, although not only inconsistent with every appearance of truth, but also being diametrically opposite to positive facts.

I say we must give way to all such trifles as these, in preference of what they, in their great wisdom and moderation are pleased to assert, or otherwise we must take the consequences.

This was my case, for I must be so weak foolish as to prove to them that the working of one Engine alone, at the rate they charged me for
water

Water, would bring them in the trifling sum of £.138,303 and upwards per year, (with working 14 hours in the day, and six days in the week for the year round) intimating at the same time that perhaps they might be rather hard set to make it appear, that their annual expences bore any proportion to such profits, &c.

And what do you think followed this daring piece of business? Why truly in less than three weeks after, I had my Water cut off from my house: And what could I or any one expect otherwise; for what have individuals to do with what they get? this was touching them in a tender part thus, for their tenants to trouble themselves or to presume to know any thing respecting their income, and at the same time to offer to put them to the test upon the matter; such things must militate but too forcibly against their interest for them to put up with, without resentment; therefore must confess, all things duly considered, have reason to be very thankful that it was not my head instead of my water, nothing doubting but ~~that~~ they would very freely have done me that honor, could they have told properly which way to bring it about. I beg pardon for having digressed so far from the main point; but to proceed,

It may here be remarked that their former advances above-mentioned, arose to no more than the very small or petty amount of 50 per cent. upon what I originally paid. Therefore they thought proper now to raise me to 18 shillings per year, it being 30 per cent more; whether all

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other

other of their tenants were raised in due proportion at this time, I know not, but am apprehensive that the rise was general.

However, be this as it may respecting others, I was now given to understand by their Collector, when he called for the first half year's rent which became due in 1786, that such was their rise upon me. But although I had tacitly submitted to their former advances, I began now to think of making a stand, not knowing to what lengths they meant to run; accordingly after some time to consider of the matter, I tendered down 7s. 6d. for the time, refusing to pay the advenient rate, which money said person refused to take; this brought on the first trial I had of the kind at the Court of Requests, for I was by the Shadwell Water Company cited personally to appear at the above Court on Friday August 25, 1786, which citation I accordingly obeyed.

The cause came on before you Mr. Mc In——sh and another Gentleman or two whose names I knew not: the person that attended for the above Company made his demand for nine shillings for half a year's water; and if you remember Mr. Mc In——sh, the first question you asked me was, whether I acknowledged to the debt, and I told you no, farther adding, that I acknowledged to but part of it; and no sooner had I opened the case to you, and the other gentlemen concerned, informing you at the same time that I had tendered down the money, at the highest rate I had ever paid before; I say, no sooner had I thus cleared up

up the case to you and the other gentlemen, but what you on your parts, without much hesitation, told me to pay down the 7s. 6d. (it being what I had offered them as above, which I immediately did pay) and you said that you would make the Company stand to the expences of the Court, which you undoubtedly did, as I was not called upon to pay any such expences. Had your future conduct or proceedings in these matters, been agreeable or conformable to this first decision, there had been no call for troubling you at this time: But your awards were very different afterwards, which shall endeavour to bring forward, please God to spare me, step by step.

And it may not be amiss here to take notice, that I left my house in Ratcliff-Highway, the latter end of this year 1786, and took one in Wapping at six pounds per year less rent than the former, which house was also supplied with water by the same Company; but, notwithstanding it's being so much less rent, and their being cast at the above Court, they insisted upon having the same for water as they did before, viz. 18s. per year

I demurred again, they threatened me with taking me to the same Court again; upon which I wrote to them September 18, 1787, informing them that I thought their demands were very exorbitant, &c. or otherwise I should not dispute it; as I farther told them, that I had not a wish but to pay what was reasonable and just. But having by this time entered more deeply into the subject, and being well satisfied that their demands were
very

very excessive, as such I made them an offer in said letter of paying them 12s. per year and no more, giving them to understand at the same time, that I was persuaded that their profits at such rate must be very great, farther telling them that until they would condescend so far as to convince me of my error therein, that I was not agreeable to pay them any more. This was on a Tuesday, and finding by this time that these gentlemen were to meet on the Thursday following, at their works in Shadwell, I took the opportunity of waiting upon them there, thinking to have reasoned matters a little with them; but I might just as well have attempted to argue Bears or Tigers out of their prey, as to think of diverting these gentlemen from their purpose, for they would hear nothing, or at least regard nothing; I could say upon finding this, rather than to have any further trouble with them, but not from any manner of conviction or apprehension it was their rights, but purely to avoid trouble as above, I made them an offer of allowing them 15 shillings per year, and tendered them down the money to pay the half year then due; but their High and Mightinesses in a very haughty manner refused to take it, at which time one of the company (meaning one of the persons then present who composed the said board) said to the chief speaker, which I supposed to be the governor, "Cut him short, cut him short;" upon which the other immediately told me, that they would not abate me a halfpenny, threatening me at the same time with cutting off my water, not forgetting to let me know that it would cost me a great deal more to lay

lay it on again. But this menace did not happen to have what we may well suppose, was the desired or intended effect; for instead of tamely and tacitly submitting to their will and pleasure, herein I immediately told them that they might depend upon it that I would not lay it on again at all; this plain and positive answer seemed to disconcert them not a little, for directly upon it one of the above Board, viz. the Chairman or chief Speaker roared out in a violent manner "Turn him out, turn him out, out with him, &c. &c." upon which I came away, leaving them to console themselves upon this dreadful disappointment. — It is in this respect that I think they ought to be learnt better manners towards their customers, as above mentioned. But to return, may we not well ask for what reason they would not abate me a halfpenny, I am well assured that they could assign no reason at all better than what is generally known by a woman's reason, viz. "We will not, because we will not."

For if we apply to facts it will most plainly and positively appear that their demands upon me were most exorbitant, unreasonable, unequal and unjust, as above set forth; most exorbitant and unreasonable, as I can very well defy them to make it appear otherwise than that their profits must be very excessive, if all the water their Engines throw up was paid for after the rate of even one third of what I then offered them, in case they are constantly at work, viz. about 14 hours a day, and to work 6 days a week, as above-mentioned.

I say

I say I can very well defy them refuting me herein, as I have been very particular in taking notice of the water we generally expended, and have made calculations accordingly; and I know of no way that is more proper to be assessed or rated by, than according to the water we make use of; a specimen of which calculation I have laid before their High and Mightinesses, inclosed in a letter bearing date June 24, 1788. But to be somewhat more particular, according to the calculation I then made and delivered to them, their income, from the working of one Engine alone, at the rate of one third part of what I then offered them as above, would amount to £38.417 and upwards, per year; judge ye then if their profits must not be excessive, at even such rate, and consequently would be upwards of treble that sum, at the rate I offered to have paid them, which rate they refused as above.

But, to consider this affair in another point of view, viz. with regard to what my neighbours were charged for water by these same gentry, with the difference of rent of families, &c.

I must here observe that my house in Wapping was no more than 16 pounds per year, and one of my next door neighbours, viz. to the westward of me, as I have been told by one that lived in the house, that the standing rent thereof was a hundred pounds per year; however, be that as it may, I have heard my landlord himself say, (who at the same time was landlord of it also) that it was above five times the value of mine; again,

again, with respect to families, they were for the most part at least 5 or 6 times as many as we were, viz. the master of the house and his wife, two servants, women, six children, and apprentice boy, journeymen, most likely more or less as work fell in said master &c. being sail makers, and we on the other hand, very rarely exceeded two in family viz. myself and wife, and for months together, only myself, my wife not being at home, but notwithstanding this great disparity or inequality, respecting rent and families their High and Mightinesses, nevertheless, insisted upon my paying every farthing as much for water as them.

Again, my next door neighbour on the other side of me, viz. to the eastward, was my landlord his premises very large, and suppose by far more valuable than the other I have been speaking of, being not only his dwelling house, which is much larger than that which was mine, but also a very large building backwards, which serves for both bakehouse and warehouse, being the whole breadth of his and my dwelling house together, which extends quite to the water side, and if the standing rent of the other is 100*l.* per Year, should suppose these premises worth at least, 120 as to family himself, and wife, and elderly lady, (if I mistake not his mother) two servants, women, and as to apprentices and journeymen, I cannot pretend to say how many, but this I can say that they were frequently if not generally at work, day and night at biscuit baking, but it seems the above water company in their profound wisdom, equity, &c. &c. charge this gentleman one shilling per year

year more than what they did to me or my other next door neighbour; if this does not shew or prove the uprightness as well as equality of their dealings, I cannot pretend to say what will. If any one should doubt the authenticity of the above, they may with great ease satisfy themselves of the truth thereof, by applying at the spot; my late landlord's house is No. 231, that which was at this time mine, is 232, and the then Mr. Parker's 233, and they all lie between the bottom of Newmarket-street, and Wapping Dock-street, Wapping.

Now taking these facts in these different points of view, would venture to appeal not only to you, but also to the candour of any sensible considerate unprejudiced person or persons whatever, whether I have not positively and clearly proved not only that they could give no manner of reason better than that of a woman's, as above observed, for not abating me a halfpenny; but also whether I have not at the same time proved in the most full and positive manner possible, that their demands upon me were most exorbitant, unreasonable, unequal and unjust, as above set forth over and over again; for whether we consider the very trifling quantity of water we made use of, which I made appear to these despots themselves, in my letter to them bearing date June 24, 88; the difference in the value of my premises, and those of my next neighbours, or the difference in number of our families: I say taking the subject up in any one of these views separately, or taking all of them jointly together, it amounts all to one and the same thing, and plainly and positively proves

as

as full as absolute facts can prove, that if 18 or 19 shillings per year was as much as my above neighbours were assessed for water, then in due proportion I ought not to have been charged more than about three shillings a year at most; whereas I at one time offered them 15 as above, and never less than 10. Would also farther appeal to you, Gentlemen, as above specified, whether this does not at the same time, as clearly and positively prove as any thing in nature can do, that the proceedings of these gentlemen, viz. the Shadwell Water Company are or would be, if they could always carry their point, the most arbitrary despotic and tyrannical in their way, as any persons possibly can be; if so, most certainly it is high time that they were looked into, and some check given to their power and proceedings, unless Englishmen are content to become some of the most abject slaves in the world.

On this same day, being Thursday Sept. 20, 87, came to hand a summons from the same gentlemen for me to appear the next morning at the above Court, but whether their High and Mightinesses were so much irritated at not being able to make me tamely bend to them, as caused it thus to be hurried upon me, or whether it was taken out some time before, I cannot take upon me to say, however, be that as it may, so it fell out, that it came to hand at this time.

But fearing lest I might not have an opportunity, so properly and fully to lay open the subject in a verbal way, and being desirous at the same
E- time

time of making fore work, therefore I drew up a statement of the case in writing, not only in a circumstantial way, proving by plain and positive facts, the unreasonableness of their demands, but also proving that they had at this time cited me there upon the very same principles as they had done before, viz. as on the 15th of August, 86, when the Court decided the cause in my favor, obliging them to take what I had before offered them, without my attendance there, and also obliging them to pay the expences of the Court, as above set forth.

And I particularly requested in the beginning of said paper, that whoever it might be that the cause might come before, that they would be so kind as to give it a candid hearing, and not to pass it off too hastily, intimating that it was of a public nature, &c. &c.

I was suited accordingly as under, the cause happened to come before a Mr. H—f—d, and I did not perceive that there was another person belonging to the Court, that had the least concern with him in the matter; and directly after my antagonist Mr. Em—g—n had made his demand, I laid the above paper down open before the said Mr. H—sf—d; he asked what it was, I told him that it was a statement of the case, and begged that he would be so kind as to look at it, but he would not so much as take it into his hand; upon which I shewed him a copy of the letter which I had wrote to the Governor and Company of the
Shadwell

Shadwell Water Works but three days before this time, that letter being dated Sept. 18, 87, and this hearing, if it might be accounted one, was on Friday the 21st of the same month and year; I told him what it was, and endeavoured to have prevailed upon him to have examined the contents thereof, but he would not take this paper into his hand any more than the former, although it was much shorter than the other, nor would he pay any regard to what I could say; in short, he would not allow me to say much, but hurried the matter through in a trice, without giving himself time to examine into the case, to know whether the demand was just or unjust, saying that "if I had water I must pay for it to be sure;" these were the very express words which he made use of, and he ordered me to pay the full money charged; however, he asked me how I would pay it, by which I suppose he would have given me some time to pay it in, if I had required it, but I told him if I must pay it, that I thought that I might as well pay it then as not, to which said gentleman replied and said that "it would save me six-pence and that was all," and I paid it accordingly;—thus ended this second trial, being exactly the reverse of the former one. This same Mr. H—f—d, I am informed, is since dead.

How this sort of running matters over and deciding upon them without examining into them, corresponds with the oath or engagement the Commissioners (should suppose) take when they enter upon this important office, must leave to the

the determination of such gentlemen that are better acquainted with these things than what I am at present; however, I think that any one may very well venture to affirm, that there is not so much as the least appearance of equity or justice in such proceedings, am thinking that perhaps this gentleman might think it too troublesome to read the best part of a sheet of paper or papers over in writing, and they wrote but by a very indifferent hand withal; be that as it may, although he is no more, some of his colleagues in office, probably may have the satisfaction very soon now of reading said papers in print; which as they may then be read with more ease, of course the more agreeable.

But to proceed, although I had lost this trial, it did not altogether dishearten me, knowing that perseverance in a good cause is always commendable; as such, was determined not to submit to arbitrary power in the land of liberty, or in other words, not to pay money wrongfully without being forced to it; the consequence of which was, that when another half year came round, threats and menaces soon ensued; nevertheless I stood to my text, viz. that their demands were very exorbitant, unreasonable, &c. &c. and as such refused to pay at any such rate; however, after many threats and refusals, &c. at last a third citation by the said Company came to hand, requiring me personally to appear as usual at the above Court of Requests; this was on the evening of the 7th of April, 1788, and I was ordered to appear

appear there the next morning, it being of a Tuesday; I attended accordingly, and seeing you Mr. Mc I——h in court, took care to introduce the cause before you, little doubting but what you must of course decide upon it the same way as you and the others, as were concerned with you did the first time as I was cited before you upon this business, viz. on the 25th of August, 86, especially as these gentry were now acting upon the very same principles as at that time, excepting some very aggravating circumstances against themselves which made no small difference betwixt this and their first trial, viz. the house which I occupied at this time, being six pounds a year less rent, with the other very singular disproportions between me and my neighbours as above set forth.

These different circumstances being considered, could not have thought that there could have been a doubt but what I must have gained this cause. But how was I surpris'd when the affair came before you, to hear you Mr. Mc I——sh and another gentleman, for there was another concerned with you, both declare that you had not power to affix a price upon other peoples property. How was I struck, I say, when I heard this; but how happens this strange change; had you not the same power at this time, as you had on the 25th of August, 1786, as above treated of, or were you not endowed with a power to search, try, and examine into these complaints, and to rectify any abuses therein? Surely this carries but

but a very odd appearance with it ; the cause of which is undoubtedly best known to God and yourselves : what have you no other power than that of enforcing payment at all events, whether claims are just or unjust ? very curious ; how then is this called a Court of Equity !

I said but now, these different circumstances being considered ; but why should I say so, for who did consider them ; why truly none but myself ; you were in too much haste to consider or examine into any thing, and most certainly had you traversed, weighed, and examined them ever so minutely, if you were or are devoid of all power but that of compulsion, viz. that of enforcing payment, it could have been of no manner of consequence ; for upon the whole, it amounts to neither more nor less than this, namely, that the Shadwell Water-Company have thought fit to charge you so much for water, and if you don't think well to pay it, we shall and must force you to it, right or wrong.

This brings to my mind a reply a poor woman once made to Philip of Macedon, which I have many times read, it runs thus :

“ In those ages when princes disdained, not to
 “ converse with their subjects and to listen to the
 “ dictates of common sense ; history informs us,
 “ that Philip of Macedon was prodigiously affect-
 “ ed with the reply of a poor old woman, who
 “ entreated him to hear her complaint, and to
 “ redress

“redress her grievance; he told her he was not at
 “leisure, to what purpose then says she, are you
 “a king? the monarch was sensible of the force
 “of her reasoning, and being convinced, that to
 “refuse justice to his subjects was a virtual abdi-
 “cation of the government, heard her complaint,
 “did her justice, and resumed his royalty.”

How far this may be applicable in the present
 case, must leave for others to determine; this king
 objected as not having time, and you say you
 have not power, you did not deny the exorbitance
 of the charge, but in order to pacify me you both
 informed me that you had been obliged to pay
 for water for houses, while untenanted, conse-
 quently were more imposed upon than what I
 was.

And is it possible for Englishmen, for Britons
 at least, and persons of property withal, I say is
 it possible for such, thus tacitly and tamely to
 submit to such things, and that from their fellow
 subjects too, from persons most likely not a whit
 better than themselves, “Tell it not in Gath,
 “publish it not in the streets of Askelon;” but
 your cry has been, when speaking of these things
 in a private manner, How can we help ourselves,
 we cannot do without water, where is another
 New River to come from, &c. &c. all which you
 apparently spoke under a very strong idea of be-
 ing oppressed and imposed upon by a Water Com-
 pany.

pany. I would here ask in the name of common sense, could any, even the greatest despots or tyrants in the world, desire or wish for more agreeable language, or greater condescension or submission from those whom they might intend to oppress or tyrannize over, surely not; may they not well say in their hearts "ha, so we would have it;"† and so they most certainly would have it too, if all were of this low, mean, poor groveling disposition, without spirit or fortitude to resist or complain, let their proceedings be ever so galling, unreasonable, or unjust.

With respect to how we can help ourselves, perhaps I may, with God's permission, tell you more about by and bye.

But to proceed, by this time I found that I had not the least chance of carrying my point this way, therefore when the next half-year came round, I wrote my second letter above spoken of to the Shadwell Water Company (it bearing date June 24th, 1788) wherein I not only proved to them by a plain and positive calculation (which I inclosed in said letter) the exorbitance and inequality of their demands, but also reasoning and remonstrating with them, concerning their arbitrary, absurd, and impolitic proceedings, giving them at the same time plain hints of what I had in view, had they had any eyes to see, or understandings to perceive, or rather had not their thirst for arbitrary sway, borne all before it.

I also

† Psalm 35, and 25,

I also, in order to make an end of this disagreeable business, one way or other, told them plainly and positively, that I was determined in future to pay them no more than at the rate of ten shillings per year, &c. And that in case they did not think well to supply me upon such terms, that they might cut their water off as soon as they thought proper; and with respect to the half year which was then upon the turn, I intimated to them that I thought it more than paid for, but left it for them to determine whether they saw it in such light or not.

And most certainly had they not been strongly prepossessed not only against me but against all conviction, and perhaps what in fact may ultimately prove against their own interest. I say, had not this been the case, they must have known that it was far more than paid for, and they ought to have given way accordingly, but this did not suit with their High and Mightinesses pleasure, or more particularly with the principle abovementioned.

Therefore, this soon hastened Mr. Em—g—n after me for the said half year's rent, threatening me as usual, not only with having me again to the above court, but also with cutting off my water; as to the former, I told him that I had told my mind to his masters, and should abide by the consequences, and as to the latter, I told him that as they had obliged me to pay just what they had thought proper for some time past, that in future I was determined that they should either

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take

take what I was pleased to give them, or otherwise nothing all; most impudent and mortifying language surely to be held out to such despots as these which I had to deal with.

But to pass on, Mr. Em—g—n told me that they could not abate me any thing, had he said that they were determined at all events, right or wrong, that they would not abate me any thing, he might then have said right enough; but for him to tell me that they could not after I had so clearly and positively proved to them the unreasonableness and inequality of their demands, such pretence at best must be downright nonsense, and should suppose could proceed from nothing better than the height of madness and folly, as they must know that I knew to the contrary. However, this said collector called several times, threatening me with cutting my water off, unless I would agree to pay what the gentlemen (as he was pleased to call them) had rated me at (I beg their pardon's for sometimes to avoid tautology, I have called them so myself) however, I as constantly told him that I would not. In particular he called threatening in this manner on Saturday July the 12th, 88, upon which I told him that they might do it if they thought proper as soon as they pleased. Tuesday the 15th. he came again in the morning, and brought some workmen with him under pretence of executing the job; they took up a flag stone just by the side of my door and laid it down again, and then went away, seemingly as though they did not know where about my pipe lay as this was far enough from

from it. However, there came some men again the same evening, and actually did cut it off; they seemed at no manner of loss then to know whereabouts to prick for it, but dropped as direct upon it as well could be, which gave me some reason to think that their attempt in the morning was only a feint, in order to try if they could not make me bend to their High and Mightinesses pleasure, but it would not do, as I knew they were acting upon a base, sordid, detestable principle; therefore, I was as determined and inflexible by this time as these tyrants themselves; however, thus ended this job, these gentry having now put their former menaces in force; nevertheless, great as they are, they were not able to substantiate their other threat: namely, that it would cost me a great deal more to lay the water on again, for I have left that business for some one else to do, if it is ever done at all; not that I left my house upon that account, for being near the river side I could have water at any time for fetching, and no thanks to them, and as we made use of but very little, it did not stand me in one third of what they charged me.

But all was not finally settled yet, there was this other half year, viz. from Christmas to Midsummer, 88, unpaid; as I was not able to persuade my antagonists that they had already had more than their due through extortion; be this as it may, it was full five months from the time they cut my water off until I received my fourth citation to appear at the above Court of Requests, the former being July 15th, 88, as above observed, and the latter on the 15th of December following;

following; whether this was owing to any thing else but lenity I cannot pretend to account for myself, therefore must leave it to others to determine.

This brings me to this fourth trial itself, if it could properly be called such, and it was had before you Mr. Mc I——sh and another gentleman, whose name I knew not, I wish I did, for certain reasons; but to proceed, this affair came forwards on Tuesday the 16th of December 88, when you and your colleague in office were now in exactly the same tone as you were on the last trial on the 8th of April in this same year, viz. you both firmly and positively insisted upon it that you had not a power to affix a price upon other people's property; therefore you both unanimously persisted in it that I must pay the money, but I did not think well this time to pay it in Court, therefore you allowed me a month to pay it in, which I accordingly made a point of doing within the time; but to mend the matter was now obliged to pay four-pence more than my due, viz. the groat which I had paid in Court for stamping the summons I was now charged with again; I told the person which receives the money that I had paid it as above, but he told me that he could not allow it me, and said that I should have taken care to have had it returned to me again by the Plaintiff, but I was not so well acquainted with the nature of your proceedings as to be up to this point, however this is trifling to the other, which seems to me much of a piece, save only with this difference,
this

this last trifle, might be purely owing to neglect or mistake, but with regard to the other matter, I mean this last trial in particular, I cannot conceive in any better light than a downright picking of my pocket of so much money, altho' under the appearance of equity; then of course, the two preceeding trials were, in great measure, of the same stamp or complexion, all which I am persuaded you might very well have been convinced of, had you been inclined properly to have examined into the particulars, for I had not only the papers with me now, which I offered to Mr. H——d, to read at the second hearing, which I had of this kind as above recited, but I had also a copy of my last letter to the Shadwell Water Company, which papers I handed out of my pocket, with a view of laying them before you, but you Gentlemen seemed in so much haste with the business, at the same time, in a manner pushing the papers from you, by time after time, avowing that you had it not in your power to affix a price, as above, &c. &c.

Upon my thus finding that it was in vain to attempt to push the matter any further, I put the papers in my pocket again, submitting to your decision of the cause, weak and unfair as such decision appears to me to be.

Having thus gone through this part, but having omitted a singular circumstance, which most properly belongs to the former proposition, must beg leave to revert back to it again; I mean with respect to my antagonist Mr. E——g——n, accusing

accusing me, time after time, in open court, with never paying without being forced to it, as above set forth, most likely he thought he did great things in so doing, and although I have, should humbly hope sufficiently answered this declamation already, nevertheless, would now ask any of you Gentlemen Commissioners if any of you can recollect me ever being cited there before, or upon any other occasion, at any time, except this dispute with this Water Company; if not, would then ask, if there can lie the least slur or disgrace against any one, as though he was lacking of a principle to pay his just debts, because he refuses to pay unjust ones without being thus forced to it.

Not that I would by this wish to persuade you Gentlemen that I never was cited there before, or upon any other occasion, for I was once, altho' never but once, and that was on Tuesday, July 23d, 1776, but the plaintiff not appearing himself at this time, but had sent others to appear for him, and the court finding there was a kind of contest in the case, they adjourned the cause until Friday the 26th, and gave orders for the plaintiff to attend himself, at which time he and I met at said Court-house; the cause came on before some of the Commissioners that were chiefly strangers to me; and although I did not dispute the plaintiff's charge which he made against me, nevertheless these gentlemen finding that I had suffered by him in another respect, they dismissed the business without allowing him a single half-penny;

penny; which if you gentlemen will please to refer back to your books at that time, you will undoubtedly find to be matter of fact. Methinks this does not look much like a want of power in the Commissioners.

This is the circumstance as I mentioned above, which I thought well to introduce, as it exhibits in so full and striking a manner, the difference of power which the Commissioners at this time exercised, to what you pretend to.

And must beg leave further to observe, that to suppose a Court composed of a number of gentlemen that were impowered to compel payment of all demands whatever (we will say under a certain sum) right or wrong, without said gentlemen having at the same time a full power not only to examine into, but to rectify any abuses, or exorbitant unjustifiable demands, which might be brought before them; I say, to suppose such a thing as this, must imply not only a great weakness and wickedness, in the governing powers which ordained, and support such a Court, but if possible something still worse, which I want words to express: a power this so infamous or iniquitous, and repugnant to every principle of virtue, of reason or religion, of good or sound policy, that it needs only to be named to be reprobated, and it must be at the same time one of the greatest burlesques upon common sense; as any thing in nature possibly can be, and further, such Court instead of being called of Equity, rather

rather ought to be deemed the cruel, oppressive, compulsive tyrannical court.

Here is one thing which strikes me rather forcibly, which although I have touched a little slightly upon, a time or two as I have passed along, nevertheless must beg leave to expatiate a little farther upon it in this place, if you should be ready to conclude this to be a matter of impertinence in me, would beg you to recollect that I speak feelingly, having myself suffered thereby, the matter is this :

From the experience I have had in the above proceedings am led to think that a principal, if not the most principal default in at least, some of you Gentlemen Commissioners of the above Court of Requests, is, your hurrying causes thro' without giving yourselves time properly to examine into the merits thereof, which of course renders you very liable to give very wrong or improper awards, by which means many must suffer very wrongfully. And must confess this appears to me to have been eminently the case betwixt you and myself; for had you Gentlemen taken the pains properly and fully to have examined into this matter, am persuaded that you not only might very well, but at the same time had you been ruled by reason, equity and justice, most certainly you would have decided thereon in a very different way, to what you, for the most part did; and that should humbly suppose, without infringing on the powers you, as Commissioners are invested with.

Am

Am further persuaded that these three last trials of mine did not take you up scarcely five minutes each ; whereas contested matters, especially such as are of a public nature, like these of mine, ought of all things to be fully and properly examined into. On the other hand, where no dispute arises betwixt the plaintiff and defendant, but that the debt is at once acknowledged then indeed. You have little to do more than to inquire and to consider how the defendant may be able to pay the debt, and to direct payment accordingly.

I hope you will excuse me if I farther observe to you that it appears to me that your manner in your proceedings bears too near a resemblance to persons working good hand good hire as it is generally termed, viz. the more work they do the more money they get.

I do not pretend to say that this actually is the case with you, nor do I know as you have any pay at all for such service ; but this I know from what I have seen and experienced myself, that many causes are carried through so rapidly that it is morally impossible that you should know properly which way to decide upon them.

But if through the multiplicity of business you have not time to do otherwise in such case, should suppose that you ought either to adopt at least another day in the week for the purpose, or otherwise to begin at an earlier period in the morning ; and if one of these expedients is not sufficient, then to make use of both rather than to have in-

G

dividuals

dividuals injured in such respects. Remember that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and that with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us again.

I beg your pardon in using such plainness, and for thus attempting to direct or dictate to you; nevertheless am persuaded, that in case you will rightly consider and judge of the matter, that you cannot well take these hints amiss,

It is observable that it comes exactly to the same thing with respect to the public whether your power is too much limited in such cases as mine to redress the many grievances as fall under your cognizance, or that you neglect or refuse to exert your power therein; let such neglect or refusal proceed from what cause ever it may, consequently the public at large, who are sufferers thereby, have a very just and loud call to seek out for ways and means of redressing themselves.

I trust I have so plainly and positively proved to you, the unjustifiable proceedings of the Shadwell Water Company, that should suppose there needs no apology for the epithets I have in the course of these papers, so freely and generously bestowed upon them, as they most certainly very aptly and richly, in some sense or other, merit them all, or at least most of them. There is one appellation indeed which I have sometimes made use of, that does not appear to me very proper or suitable for their general character; but as I have

have given my reason for so doing, and asked their pardon for the same above, shall take no further notice of it in this place; it is farther to be noted that they have not only wronged me by their exorbitant and unjust demands, but they have also treated me like a dog, as above set forth, as such should humbly hope that my being sometimes a little severe upon them, is very excusable with you, and likewise will be with the public; which if so, I do not regard what they themselves may think of it of a straw.

But here is one thing yet which remains to be cleared up, but as I think it will come in full as properly when I address the Public themselves upon this subject, therefore do not intend to trouble you at this time with it, I mean in what sense or what different senses their High and Mightinesses may fitly be compared to Asses (having mentioned above, many of the Public being egregiously ass-ridden) which position if please God to spare me, I trust I shall be able in due time properly to clear up, or shew wherein or in what respects they resemble such animals.

If any of you gentlemen should account me a busy body, and blame me for thus troubling myself and you in this business, and at the same time conceive within your own minds that I might as well let such things alone, I must then beg leave to tell you, that I cannot think of passing such things over in silence, upon any account; since what I have laid before the above Water Company
and

and their usage to me, I have cautioned them, and intimated my intentions to them, over and over again, but they were above giving any manner of regard thereto, and more particularly the latter end of my last letter to them (after I had been reasoning and remonstrating with them concerning the unfairness and impolicy of their proceedings) runs thus :

“ Now Gentlemen, to conclude, must inform
 “ you, that I am persuaded, that unless you are
 “ deaf to reason, and blind and mad against
 “ your own interest, that you will see these mat-
 “ ters in the light of friendly hints, and will
 “ profit thereby. Yours, &c. &c.”

Well, and what was the consequence any one might ask ; what do you say was the result of this matter ? why then I will tell you ; that they have in effect put me to open defiance ; they have dared me as it were to do my worst, not only by madly cutting off my water, (although I had in said letter offered them full three times as much as I ought to have paid them, in due proportion to what my neighbours paid, as above set forth) not only this I say, but they also wantonly and wickedly enforced payment of their former unreasonable demands, even after I had so plainly and positively proved to them, as above, that said demands were so notoriously exorbitant and unjustifiable, &c. &c.

Therefore to let such things as these pass without farther notice, would not only be shewing a duplicity

duplicity and meanness, which I hope I shall never be chargeable with; such cowardliness, and want of fortitude, is a principal, if not the chief or only reason of so many being imposed upon in the manner which they so frequently are, which if I mistake not, makes good the proverb, "What is every body's business is nobody's, and what is nobody's is every body's."

I say, to drop it thus would not only be shewing a great weakness and want of fortitude, but it would also be with-drawing from what I have from time to time intimated to them and their trusty servant Mr. Em—g—n, when he hath come sometimes with his threats, &c. and as such would be in a manner swerving from truth, and also at the same time must be shrinking from the cause, and consequently must be inconsistent to every principle of virtue and that public spirit which I have from time to time held forth.

But it may be asked what can I do, if so I must then own very little, truly of myself for I willingly acknowledge myself to be but a very poor and weak instrument. But God is very strong and powerful; and can and very frequently does perform very great things, by very weak means, which we find by sacred writ he often chooses to do, witness the wonderful deliverance of the Israelites from the hosts of the Midianites by the hands of Gideon, which you may read the account of at large in the 6th and 7th Chapters of Judges: He can also work great wonders or deliverances when

when he sees fit so to do, without any human means at all, as for instance, when an angel of the Lord smote and killed of the hosts of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men in one night, the second of Kings, Chapter 19th and verse 35, with the various plagues and destructions which he wrought in and upon Egypt, in the time of her obdurate king, &c. &c.

But the Oracles of God abound with proofs, shewing that he delights in working great things by weak means, as the glory may redound to him to whom all glory, honor, and praise is due; and if he should please to vouchsafe to favor my undertakings in this case, there can then be no doubt but what I may, with his assistance, be able, weak as I otherwise am, to make every intimation good, which I have troubled these would-be omnipotent gentlemen with.

Now Sirs, to conclude, must inform you that I have been the more particular in some parts of this Letter, to give you a right understanding of the case, in order that you may be the better able to view your own conduct and proceedings therein, and consequently may have a fair opportunity of replying to any part, as above-mentioned, if you or any of you should think well so to do; nevertheless should suppose that you will scarcely offer to deny the facts therein contained; for if you should, most likely you will by so doing only increase your own embarrassment, [as facts
are

are stubborn things, as mentioned in the first onset of this letter; and I think I may very truly say, that I have not only been very exact as to the time or times when these affairs came before you, but also with respect to the matter and manner of your proceedings thereon, truly and faithfully setting them forth, according to the best of my power.

I remain, Gentlemen,

with all deference,

your very humble,

but injured Servant,

JOHN ROBINS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My good Sir or Sirs,

I humbly hope that you will be kind enough to excuse all faults, as being wrote in much haste, and I beg that you will duly weigh and consider the matter; and let me have your answer as soon as possible. I intend to wait a week for the same before I proceed any farther.

May 20th, 1790.

The Case as intended for the perusal of such of the Commissioners of the Court of Requests for the Tower Division, as the cause might come before on the 21st of Sept. 87; but it was disregarded by the gentleman which tried the cause, as more particularly related in the preceding Address, page 26th.

*To the worthy Commissioners of the Court of Requests
for the Tower Division.*

Sir or Sirs,

WHOEVER this cause comes before, I humbly hope you will be so kind as to give it a candid hearing, and not to pass it off too hastily, not for my sake only, but for the sake of the many which undoubtedly are brought here with complaints of this nature; I beg that you will consider it as being of a public concern.

I meet you Gentlemen with the greater boldness, as being well assured that you are no strangers to the arbitrary proceedings of the Shadwell Water Company, respecting their unreasonable and rapid advance on their customers, under pretence of their being greatly out of pocket by the same; believe it who may, for I must confess that my faith is not quite so strong, or yet likely to be, until I have some better proof of it than their bare assertions, contradictory and inconsistent as they are.

Now

Now Gentlemen, to make this matter more plain to you, must beg leave to lay before you the subsequent facts and calculations, (for although I have not been able at present to come at the whole of the expence they are at, nevertheless think from such principal ones as I have nearly fathomed, that any person of any judgment may be able to form a shrewd guess whether they are gainers or losers by the business.)

And first I have it I think from good authority, that either of their Engines throws up 40 gallons of water per stroak, and that they take 16 strokes per minute, which is equal to 640 gallons per minute, or 38,400 per hour; the expence attending which, I understand is about one bushel of coals, which we all know pretty near the value of.

This quantity of water I am persuaded, is as much to the full as we expend in 35 years, as I have many times measured the water as it hath come in from time to time, and never found it to exceed two gallons per day, unless washing or some particular cleaning of the house hath intervened, but frequently less than two; however, as I would not set it under the mark, have stated it at three gallons per day one day with another, which, by attending to the following calculation, you will observe answers to the time above specified.

H

Days

Days in the Year - 365
multiplied by - 3

gives - 1095) 38400 (35 Years

3285

5550

5475

75

Again another, and that beyond a doubt, the most principal expence they are at, is their pipes of conveyance, which have enquired of several Pump-makers to learn the value of them, and they all agree in this, that the small bored ones are not more than 2s. per foot, and that the larger ones run from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. I also asked how long they would endure in the ground, and was answered time out of mind; I asked again, if 20 years, was answered a deal longer, if good at first and properly laid down.

The front of my house measures about 19 feet, now as a small bored pipe is sufficient to supply a street, and supposing this about the common run of houses, then we may say 19 feet of pipe at 2s. is equal to 38s. and two houses, viz. one on each side of the street, at 18s. each water-rent per year, is equal to 36s. within two shillings of clearing such expence in one year, except a trifle for laying them down: Now it is observable that if the annual

annual rent for water, will nearly clear the expence of the pipes in one year, for the breadth of one house, consequently it will for a whole street, if for a street, for a parish, &c. &c.

Another principal expence is their raising their Engines, &c. first of all, which I have not had an opportunity yet to enquire into, but most certainly they can amount to but a mere trifle, compared with the cost of laying down pipes sufficient to keep an Engine constantly at work.

It is very reasonable and just, that they ought to have an income from their works, not only adequate to pay all their servants their wages, in their different departments, to keep said works in repair, but to pay them withal a handsome interest for their trouble, and laying down their money at first.

But who is it as considers the matter but ever so slightly, but what must be convinced that their income must abundantly out-run all such demands; but it seems we must not call in question what they assert, although in full contradiction to our own understandings, as also against every appearance of truth, and this without their offering the least shadow of proof for what they affirm.

Now gentlemen, to come more immediately to the point in dispute, this is not the first time of my appearing in this Court, upon this subject, if you please to examine your books for the 25th of

of August last year, I believe you will find my name there, at which time the gentlemen that heard the cause, determined or gave it in my favor, and now this same Company have brought me here again upon the very same footing as before, only with this difference at that time; I was threatened by their collector to have my water cut off if I would not pay the advanced rate, but now upon being informed that I was to be cited again before this court upon this affair. I wrote to the company themselves stating the reasons of demurring to their charge, &c. &c. a true copy of which I have with me for your perusal, if you please to look at it, I also attended on these gentlemen at their board yesterday, respecting this same business, but could gain no manner of satisfaction or redress, they told me that they had sat there for 20 Years and had not divided a halfpenny and farther that they were 10000^l. in debt but did not offer the least proof of what they asserted, thus we must take their ipse dixit, for matter of fact without daring to call in question what they say.

But to cut this matter short, I offered them first what was specified in the letter, but finding them refractory and rather than to have had any farther trouble with them, I proposed paying them 15^s. per year and tendered down the money to have paid them the half year then due, but they refused it seemingly with scorn, telling me that they would not abate me a halfpenny, threatening me at the same time with cutting off my water, not forgetting

6.33
forgetting to let me know that it would cost me
a great deal more to lay it on again.

In answer to which menace, I immediately told
them that they might depend upon it that I would
not lay it on again at all upon which I was di-
rectly ordered out of the room in a very abrupt
and ungentle manner.

Thus first, they endeavour to enforce compli-
ance to whatever they think well to exact, and
that upon the most arbitrary and despicable prin-
ciples, knowing we cannot do without water nor
easily help ourselves.

Now gentlemen would submit the case to your
better judgment, that as this water company hath
cited me here again upon for exactly the same
principles as before, which award was given
against them, whether they have not in so doing
shewn a contempt of court.

I beg your pardon for having troubled you with
such a tedious account, but the reason is, this I
was in fear, lest I should not have had an oppor-
tunity of explaining myself so properly in a ver-
bal way.

Now Gentlemen, I remain with due submission
to your decision, whatever it may be,

Your very humble and devoted servant, &c.

JOHN ROBINS.

(54)
Part the second

~~forgetting to let me know that it would cost me
a great deal more to lay it on again.~~

LETTER the 1st.

*To the Governor and Company of the
Shadwell Water Works.*

Gentlemen;

I Understand by the person which collects for you in this neighbourhood, that I am to be cited to the Court of Requests for payment of half a year's water, for which it seems you demand nine shillings. I think a very exorbitant charge, otherwise should not dispute it, as I have not a wish but to pay what is reasonable and just, but am not willing to be imposed upon in the manner as you seem to be advancing from time to time. I had water from you for several years, at ten shillings per year, even when the raising of it at your works, by the best I can learn, stood you

in

~~My Gentlemen, I remain with due submission
to your decision, whatever it may be.~~

* This was the third time of the Shadwell Company advancing me all in the space of eight years (if I mistake not) wherein they had almost doubled their original charge upon me

in double, or at least near double the expence it doth at this time; but by what I perceive, as your costs are less, you are raising your customers in proportion; the reason§ of which I believe is pretty clearly understood by most, but my good frs, to put this matter to an issue.

I here inform you, that rather than have any farther trouble or contention with you (not as I am any ways in fear of meeting you, or any one you may appoint at the above equitable and decisive Court)|| that I am agreeable to pay you at the rate of twelve shillings per year, although perswaded at the same time that your profits thereon must at such rate be excessive; for I cannot by any means find by the best intelligence I can

* This was spoke with reference to their not burning above half the quantity of coals at their works, now or when this letter was sent to the above company, to what they did when their steam engines were upon the old or original construction, (I having had this intelligence some years past, from one that attended on the fire at such time.) But I have been much better informed since this happened, for I have it now from the best authority, that instead of a saving of one half, that upon this new or much improved method, which the said engines are now erected upon that one bushel of coals, will go as far as three or four would do upon the former plan.

§ Alluding to their having got the West-Ham Works into their own hands.

|| This was spoke with the greater confidence as this company were cast, there the first trial I had of the kind with them which was held the 25th of Aug. 1786 which is more particularly described in page 18 of the above address to the commissioners of the said court.

I can get, and the little water we use, that, all
expenses considered, that it can possibly stand
you in any thing near one half of the money.

Therefore, Gentlemen, until you can and will
be so condescending as to convince me of my
error herein, that I am not agreeable to pay you
any more, and if you think well to accept of this
you may order your collector to call for it as soon
as you please.

I am, Sirs,

with all deference,

your very humble servant to command, &c. &c.

JOHN ROBINS.

No. 232, Wapping.

Tuesday 2 o'Clock, Sep. 18, 1787.

LETTER the IIId.

*To the Governor and Company of the
Shadwell Water Works.*

Gentlemen,

IF you recollect, I troubled you last year with a letter dated Sept. 18th respecting the annual charge you make upon me for water, which charge I am well assured is very exorbitant, otherwise as I told you in said letter, that I should not dispute it, not having a wish but to pay what is reasonable and just. But at the same time must confess I don't like to be imposed upon; however in consequence of said dispute, I attended your board the Thursday following being the 20th of Sept. last, at which time I must confess although sorry to say such a thing, you acted very unbecoming gentlemen, using me more like a dog than any thing else: and what for? Why truly for taking the privilege of a harmless worm, you on your parts without offering the least shadow of proof, of the equity of your charge, not only told me that you would not abate me a half-penny thereof, but threatened me at the same time with cutting my water off, not forgetting to tell me

me that it would cost me a deal more to lay it on again, upon which enforcing clause, I told your high and mightinesses, that you might depend upon it that I would not lay it on again at all, which seemed so much to awaken your choler, that directly thereon one of your board thundered out, turn him out! turn him out; out with him! &c. &c. very genteel usage this, I have lived on a spot which I think the government thereof is reckoned as arbitrary as in any part of the known world, but must confess I think I never met with any thing to equal it.*

A very pretty way this of enforcing compliance to your demands, let them be ever so unreasonable or unjust, and from this idea too, that we cannot help ourselves, consequently must submit is this acting according to that great christian principle 'do as you would that others should do unto you,' surely not there is something seems so fordid and mean in the matter, that a person of any feelings should suppose would shrink at the thought; you seem to treat your customers or tenants as though you think them not worthy the

Alluding to having had my residence for some years in the island of St. Helena, a place in the possession of the East India Company, the government of which I think is esteemed as despotic as any part of the known world, which I found very much to answer such idea, nevertheless I was never treated there in that rude and ungenteel manner as I have been by this water company, was never ordered out of the presence of the governor and council like a dog.

the least information or satisfaction given for your raising them in the manner you have done, its true, you told me that you were some thousands in debt, but in the name of common sense, what have your tenants or the Public to do with that, it must be five times indeed, if a few individuals can make large purchases far beyond what they have in their power to discharge † and then for them to lay at their own discretion a heavy tax upon their tenants, in order to bring themselves round again and then when so done to amass enormous fortunes to themselves thereby, it is enough if I mistake not for the public to submit in these cases to the exigences of state without being obliged to bend without controul to every set of despots that would wish thus to enslave them. Before I proceed any farther, would wish to fix your attention to one point, viz. if any thing I have said or any thing I may have yet to advance, should seem any way harsh or unbecoming, that you will consider it as arising from the pen of one that is writing under the impression of being oppressed by you; for you have not only demanded your full advanced price, weak and impolitic as such conduct must be, but you have enforced

† This was spoke upon a supposition that these gentlemen had made a purchase some time before this of the West-Ham Water Works. But whether this was really the case, I cannot take upon me positively to say, but this I know the Shadwell Company, had at least the customers in those parts where I lived which the West Ham Company formerly served.

enforced payment thereof withal; but how, as a matter of right? surely not; but rather upon that principle above-mentioned, the Court seemingly not having it in their power to mitigate these matters according to reason, equity, or justice.

Now, Sirs, perhaps you may think this a circumstance greatly in your favour; if so, I would beg leave to tell you, that I look upon it in a very different light; for if the public have no manner of way of obtaining redress, but must tacitly submit to whatever you Water Companies in your great wisdom, or rather greater avarice, think well to impose, it must certainly be high time then for them to look out for some ways and means of redressing themselves: and perhaps the time may not be very far distant, when you may find reason to repent of your temerity and obstinance, in persisting in your unreasonable charges.

But as it would not be just or becoming in any one thus to accuse, without giving some foundation for what they say, therefore have inclosed a small calculation, proving if I mistake not, what an enormous income you must have from the working of one Engine only, in case you are paid for the whole of the water raised thereby, at the rate you oblige me to pay for the small quantity we use, viz. £. 138,303 : 2 : 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{2}{7}$ per annum, a prodigious sum surely. Query, whether you will not be rather hard set to make it appear that your annual expences are any ways adequate to such profits; but perhaps you will say that your income

income thereby is not half, or even one quarter such sum, and if it be that, it is still very great: But what of all that, what doth this prove in case it is so much less than the above estimation? Why truly, that whatever your income from the working of one Engine, as above, falls short thereof, so much in due proportion am I over rated for what we expend, unless I have exaggerated in any respect in my calculation, which lies at your door to prove, but am persuaded that I am not much over the mark in any respect, unless it is in regard to what I have fixed our own expenditure at, here I believe have considerably over run the mark, having many times let down when the tub hath been filled, and measured the water as it hath come in from time to time, and never found it to exceed two gallons per day, unless washing or any particular cleaning of the house hath intervened in the time, and as for washing we have very seldom any done at home, some times we dont use near one gallon per day, for have for three weeks together been without any water coming into the tub, at the end of which time it took only $16\frac{1}{2}$ gallons to fill it, therefore am persuaded that I have over run the mark at setting it at three gallons per day.

Now Sirs, so far as this I know, that, where you find persons occupy trades that expend more water than people do in common, that you charge them accordingly, which is no more than right; but then by the same rule, where families are very small, and do not expend one quarter so much as others

others do in general, you ought most certainly to make them allowance suitable thereto, especially if low in the world and they require it of you; I think this is encountering you upon your own ground; not as I would be understood to be soliciting you as a favor to lower your charge, but claiming it as a matter of right.

But not knowing whether your High and Mightinesses will hearken to the voice of reason or not, and in order to cut short the dispute betwixt us, I here inform you, that I am determined in future to pay you no more than at the rate of ten shillings per year, being convinced that your profits must still be exceeding great, if paid for all the water an Engine will raise; at such rate therefore if you don't think well to supply me upon such terms, you may cut the water off as soon as you think proper.

I think I partly know the worst of it, and would at any time rather put up with a little inconvenience than suffer myself to be imposed upon in any such vile and arbitrary manner; with respect to this half year that is upon the turn, I esteem as more than paid for,* but it rests with you to determine whether you see it in such light or not.

Now

* This alludes to their having several times before this obliged me to pay at such excessive rates as above spoken of.

Now gentlemen to conclude, must inform you, that I am persuaded, that unless you are deaf to reason, and blind and mad against your own interest, that you will see these matters in the light of friendly hints, and will profit thereby.

I remain, yours, &c. &c.

JOHN ROBINS.

No. 232, Wapping,
June 24, 1788.

N. B. The following is the calculation spoken of in the above letter.

Stroaks taken per minute by the	
Shadwell Engine	16
No. of gallons per stroak	40
Ditto thrown up per minute	640
	60
Ditto per hour	38400
Supposed to work 14 hours per day	14

At which rate galls thrown up per day 537600
Again, supposed to work days in the year 313

69888
16128

No. of gallons raised per year 168268800

Now

Now let it be supposed a family expends three
gallons of water per day, one day with another
throughout the year, then we may say days in
the year - 365
multiplied by - 3

gives 1095 expended in the year

Then lastly, I say,

if 1095 : 18s. :: 168268800
18

3028838400(2) 10(276606(2)
2190 answer £.138303 : 2 : 5 1/2

8388
7665

7233
6570

6638 figures misplaced
6570

6840

6570

2700

2190

510

Now No. of gallons raised per year 168268800

Now

Now Gentlemen, if I am not much mistaken, this is a tolerable easy and short method, whereby any one that will be at the pains to take notice what water they expend in common, may form a shrewd guess whether they are oppressed or not in the charge imposed upon them for the same.

Mistaken

At least I humbly conceive that I have proved the exorbitance or unreasonableness, as well as the inequality of your charge against me, in so clear and full manner, that if you are not by this time convinced thereof, am persuaded that no arguments that can well be used, will be sufficient to convert, or bring you over from your present ways of thinking.

YOU all very well know, that we can no more exist without this article than without bread; and the distribution thereof being as plentiful in poor lands, they have it in their power to make us pay for what they retail to us, as well as we can the same into the hands of the poor, without hurting them. This is the reason why the poor are so much oppressed by the rich.

The being finally and truly the cause of a very great and necessary to the poor, is that upon which we must depend for our food, and that very easily and cheaply.

*An Address to the Public, but principally
intended for the Inhabitants of this
Metropolis.*

Respecting the late rapid and unreasonable
advance, at least in the East part of the town,
upon that most useful and essential element
Water

My friends and fellow sufferers,

YOU all very well know, that we can no more
exist without this article, than without
bread ; and the distribution thereof being at pre-
sent in but few hands, they have it in their power
to make us pay just what they think well to impose,
while we at the same time are not able individually
to help ourselves, at least not without suffering
great loss and inconvenience thereby.

This being strictly and truly the case, is the
cause of a very mean hand, attempting to trouble
you at this time, upon this occasion : for although
we cannot separately help ourselves, yet neverthe-
less undoubtedly, in a collective unanimous way
it may be done, and that very easily and effec-
tually too.

The

The greatest difficulty perhaps lies in persuading persons sufficiently to consider their own interest therein, to make them unite and set heartily about the business. If people would once earnestly take up the cause, undoubtedly something might then be done, especially if persons of property would look into the matter.

For if I am not much mistaken, there is an exceeding fine chance for such persons making far more of their wealth than what they well can any other way, and probably with less hazard than in most other respects, and at the same time they be doing a great public good, by lowering the water rents, which I dare believe there is great room for; and yet they to have a very handsome income for their money.

Which position I purpose with the blessing and assistance of God, to clear up so far as my present knowledge of the subject will admit, which altho' very contracted, nevertheless trust I may be able to throw such light upon the affair as to cause a farther investigation thereof to be set on foot, by which means we may most likely arrive at a much greater certainty in the business, and upon the whole, if we find ourselves imposed upon, then to seek for ways and means of redress, which as above, may undoubtedly be done very effectually, and that too without much difficulty.

I shall without farther apology attempt to lay before you some of the principal expenses and profits

profits attendant on such things, as near as what I have at present been enabled to make out, which as above, is only intended as an excitement to a farther and more public enquiry to be made into the business, &c. &c.

And first, respecting the expences attending erecting and working steam Engines.

	£.	s.
To erect one after the original plan, equal in power to these in the East part of the town, about	1000	0
To erect one upon the new or improved plan, of the same power, about	2000	0
To an annual premium for this latter, about one hundred guineas	105	0
To interest of the above £2000 at £10 per cent, per annum	200	0
To coals for working said engine 313 days in the year, 14 hours each day, allowing such engine to consume a bushel per hour, is 4382 bushels, which if we account at 1s. per bushel, they will amount per year to	219	2
To pay a Secretary, or principal Clerk, Collectors, Turn-cocks, Stoakers, &c. per annum, let us suppose about	400	0
Expences per annum, in all	924	2

These appear to be the principal expences attending the erecting and working such Engine, most

most of which particulars being obtained from real information, from persons of undoubted knowledge in these matters, as also other parts by inspection, and calculation consequently may be looked upon as being not very far from truth.

On the other hand an Engine taking 16 strokes per minute, and raising 40 gallons of water per stroke, will raise 168268800 gallons per year, by working 14 hours per day, and 313 days in the year as above mentioned; a quantity sufficient to supply 23050 families, provided they each of them expend 20 gallons per day, one day with another the year round. A quantity this, should suppose far exceeding what is fairly made use of by families in general.

The ~~more~~ income of which I humbly conceive at the rate of the present water-rents cannot be estimated at less than twenty thousand pounds per annum.

But although I have made this calculation upon supposition that an Engine takes no more than 16 strokes per minute, nevertheless there is good reason to believe that upon an average the Shadwell Engines, and undoubtedly others also, take considerably more, for I have not only been creditably informed that they do, and that by several, and by one in particular who was a principal *at* the above Works at the time I received such information from him; but farther, from my own observation

observation, have known them to take from about 16 to near 20 strokes per minute, viz. at different times, by which I find they vary in the velocity of their motion, probably owing to the different degrees of fire, and to the different heights of the water in the river, or the reservoir from whence it is drawn; but somewhat more particularly, by the assistance of a good seconds watch, have known one of the Shadwell Engines take 524 strokes in the course of 27 minutes, which is equal to 19 $\frac{1}{3}$ strokes per minute; therefore the mean betwixt this and 16, will make a considerable difference, and undoubtedly will be more than sufficient to counter-balance any little mistake in any other respect, particularly in the quantity raised each stroke, in case there should be any exaggeration therein, which if any, am well satisfied can be but very trifling, as must appear from the size of the pump, pipe, and the length of the stroke an Engine takes; and not only this, but have also been informed, and that from good authority too, that the above Engines raise 40 gallons per stroke, or within a mere fraction thereof at most, as it seems the water hath been measured, and found to correspond thereto, consequently my having rated the number of strokes taken in a minute too low, will more than make up for this error if any.

Here is one material point which I am pretty well aware will be objected to by my opponents, viz. that I account all the water an Engine throws up, without making any allowance for what runs

to waste; it is very true I do so, and for this reason too, that I at present see no manner of necessity for such quantities of water being made no manner of use of, after being thus raised, as we may frequently see running down the streets, and escaping again to the main stream, from whence great part of it at least had been taken, which surely must be owing to no small neglect, not only in the inhabitants, or at least great part of them, but as well or much more in the water Companies themselves.

But as far as I perceive, the proprietors of Water Works in this metropolis are acting nearly upon the same principle as it seems the Dutch do by their fine spices, which grow in the East Indies, as I have been many times credibly informed, that they occasionally burn and destroy great quantities thereof, in order to enhance or keep up the price, and thus making a small part sell for as much as the whole would otherwise do, which they are the better able to effect, by having all the spice islands in their own possession, which is one of the blessed fruits of monopoly.

Even so do these gentlemen, viz. the above Proprietors take care, if I mistake not, to have the water which is made use of, sufficiently well paid for, to answer for the whole, and then as far as I perceive, although they may not be chargeable with a wanton destruction thereof, nevertheless they seem quite regardless (whatever they may give out to the contrary) of what quantities
run

run to waste ; for if they were really in earnest in this respect, they might very easily find out many defects of this nature ; whereas on the other hand, if any of their tenants through indigence fall short of paying them their demands, or any who object to paying the whole as they lay claim to, under an idea of their charge being exorbitant, either of these classes may expect very soon to feel the resentment of these gentlemen, by being deprived of water, as they will cut it off by way of chastising such delinquents, the one for daring to scruple their demands, and the other class for being poor; and woe be to any one that may give such a one a pail of water, for in such case the same punishment awaits them, and that without remedy : as it is ordered by the Shadwell Water Company, (which Order most likely is a standing one) “ That if any tenant shall give water away to any person, who is not a tenant to the Company, (which are only other words to signify any one of the above classes) “ their water shall immediately be cut off, and not laid on again.” Whereas they on the other hand say, “ also any tenant having an open pipe, or suffer their water to run to waste, the water will be cut off, and not laid on again but at an advanced rent.”

Thus it is observable that a person offending in this latter sense, may have his water laid on again after its being cut off, by paying somewhat more rent, although he may have let tuns and tuns of water run to waste in a short time. It is farther observable, that although the water of such a person

person is threatened to be cut off, they do not say immediately; no, no, most probably after many notices or warnings given, and after all, if they prove incorrigible, then as the last resource, probably the Company may in the end execute the same; but even then by paying something more, as mentioned above, they may have it laid on again.

While on the other hand any person who dares to befriend any one thus cut off by these gentlemen, by way of punishment, no matter whether they in their great wisdom think well to chastise them for being poor, and as such unable to pay them regularly, or as above for objecting to their demands; I say that it is plain that if any one dares to be so bold, and so kind as to relieve any such with a pail of water, and are found out or detected in so doing, they are not only to be immediately cut off, consequently without having any personal warning, but are not to be admitted to have it laid on again. Thus we may judge of the enormity of the crime with these gentlemen, or rather tyrants, of giving a trifle of water away to assist the distressed, compared with letting very large quantities run to waste; the former we find is an unpardonable crime, no remission or forbearance; no, no, judgment is to be immediately executed against such daring offenders as these, and that to the utmost, no matter if such were to perish for want of water,

Again, it seems this is not punishment sufficient for such transgressors as these, they are to be tor-
L
tured

tured in another manner, and that severely too; this I discovered as it were providentially, just as I had wrote the above respecting their water being cut off, &c. &c. I was desired by a friend to look over some receipts and other papers in search of some other matters, amongst which papers I discovered four or five receipts for water, with the subsequent threat printed with red ink thereon, which receipts were chiefly dated in the years 1788, and 1789, this being partly in the time I had the dispute with this Company, (as particularly related in my letter to the Commissioners of the Court of Requests, &c. &c.) and partly since, I have been quite clear of them, therefore I had not the honor to have any one of these Receipts myself; their words are these :

“ Whereas the Shadwell Water Works Com-
 “ pany have discovered that divers of their
 “ tenants do fraudulently supply their neigh-
 “ bours* with water, without paying the Com-
 “ pany for the same; Notice is hereby given,
 “ that all persons detected in offending as above,
 “ will be prosecuted with the utmost severity of
 “ the Law.” As much as to say, we will be
 avenged of all such if possible.

Have been rather prolix upon this head, in
 order to prove the position above laid down, viz.
 that


* Undoubtedly meaning the same classes of persons above-mentioned.

that the Water Companies are acting much upon the same principles as our worthy and respectable neighbours and friends the Dutch; as also at the same time to shew how tenacious they are, lest any should be in the least degree benefited by their water, without they themselves having a full compensation for the same.

Come we now to treat upon the principal expences attending the setting up and carrying on Water Works, viz. the procuring and laying down pipes to convey the water from place to place, which is a business that hath no trifling expence attending it: nevertheless, great as this charge is, if I am not much mistaken, the income at the rate the Water Companies charge, will not only pay a very handsome interest for the money laid down, but will also in the space of a few years at farthest clear off both principal and interest.

Which will be very obvious by the following considerations; first, let it be noted that the small bore pipes, which at the same time are quite sufficient to supply any moderate street, (viz. any street which is not over wide)* with water, are, according

* It is meant that the Inhabitants require more water where the streets are wide, than what they do in narrow ones, but that in such streets as White Chapel, High Holborn, &c. &c. it would be attended with far more expence to carry lead pipes into the middle of such streets, from each house, than what an extra wood-pipe would amount to.

ing to the best information I can at present attain, no more than two shillings per foot (as I have inquired of several that are conversant in such matters.) Now if we consider a street laid with such pipes, let us suppose said street to contain 80 houses, 40 on each side; again, let us suppose the street to be 680 feet long, which is allowing 17 feet for the front of each house, and if we account the water-rent of such houses at 17 shillings per year, then the year's rent of the street for water, and the value of the pipes, will be exactly the same, viz. 68l. each, except only a few feet to be allowed for the joints, as the one enters a few inches within another, and a trifle more must be considered for labourers to lay them down: But in order to settle all these matters at once; suppose we allow two years rent to clear off the expence of procuring and laying down the pipes which should suppose more than sufficient to answer every cost whatever, whether of large conductors where necessary, or for furnishing spare parts, where pipes must be laid although no houses, as well as to clear every possible charge attendant on the same. This will appear the more positive if we consider that these gentlemen perhaps in most parts, charge for water-rent considerably more than after the rate of one shilling per foot for the fronts of houses; and even the large bore pipes, by what I understand, do not exceed 2s. 6d. and 3s. 6d. per foot;  suppose some of the very largest of all, to amount to four shillings, which most likely very few if any do.

But

But in case I have after all, fell short in this calculation, which I cannot at present perceive the least probability of, unless with respect to such as West-Ham Works, where the pipes must of course be run very far, for ought I know miles, where there is no, or at most very few habitations, to defray the expence; however, if this should in any particular be the case, there is plenty of room to admit of advance, even to double or treble what I have stated it at; therefore let us suppose for once, but not admit any such thing without some kind of proof thereof; I say let us suppose that 40 or even 60 thousand pounds, to be expended in laying down pipes, in order to bring in ten thousand pounds per year in water-rents, to which we may add the expence of a steam Engine two thousand pounds more, which makes the principal £. 62000, the interest of which at ten per cent.

For the first year, is	—	—	£. 6200
For the second, is	—	—	5200
For the third, is	—	—	4200
For the fourth, is	—	—	3200
For the fifth, is	—	—	2200
For the sixth, is	—	—	1200

£. 22200

Thus we must observe, that as the principal drops £. 10,000 each year, so must the interest drop in due proportion, which interest during the
fix

fix years the principal is paying off, amounts to £.22,200 which in little more than two years will be all paid off too.

Therefore it is plain, that even at this much exaggerated rate, the whole expence of Engine and Pipes, with the annual interest of the same, and that at ten per cent. will be cleared off in little better than eight years.

Now we may cast our thoughts upon what time Pipes will endure in the earth, so as to answer the intended purpose, which if not misinformed they, if good at first, will continue firm for 30 years and upwards, perhaps the greater part of them for 40 years to come.

Then we may reckon this stock for many years better perhaps than a Freehold Estate, having ten thousand a year and upwards coming in, and not near one thousand going out, until such time as the pipes begin to fail, and some of them are obliged to be replaced; we are to remember that all the principal is now paid back, as well for Engines as Pipes, together with a handsome interest for the time past, so that this extraordinary income is absolutely for nothing at all, or at most nothing more than having first of all hazarded (if it can be said that there is any hazard therein) the Principal; and for the present giving a little attention to the works being carried on, and to look after the collecting in the rents, &c. &c. which perhaps no Freehold Estate would turn in
 more

more clear gain, with less trouble attendant thereon.

Having briefly considered the principal expences attending Water Works in this metropolis, I would now beg and intreat my fellow-subjects, and in this respect fellow-sufferers, well and duly to examine, weigh and digest the same; and if by so doing, you are satisfied that we are no way hard done by, or imposed upon, but that we have this useful element of water upon as easy and equitable terms as we have any just reason to expect; then in such case let every one rest himself easy and well satisfied therein, not forgetting to return sincere thanks to that good and allwise God, who is the creator and preserver of all things, and who hath of his inestimable love bestowed this favor very liberally upon us, undeserving mortals, amidst his other innumerable blessings: but if on the other hand it should appear that we are charged after a very exorbitant, unreasonable, unjust, and unequitable manner, consequently much imposed upon, and this evil at the same time likely to be a growing one withal, then in such case should suppose it behoves every one to arise up as one man, to oppose to the utmost of his power such base proceedings, and not lie inactive, crying out, how can we help ourselves, &c. &c. to such I say, fear not, nor be dismayed, for there can be no manner of doubt but what this may be very easily and effectually done, if people would only be unanimous, and set earnestly and heartily about the business.

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The matter perhaps may in a great measure rest here, viz. whether people in general will lay the greater stress upon what the gentlemen already concerned in such works, are pleased to give out, and what they seem to wish at all events to force down our throats, or whether they will be governed by their own reason, and that grounded upon plain and positive matters of fact.

Some at least of the above gentlemen seem to wish to persuade us, that they get nothing at all by their water; for instance, when I attended on the Committee of the Shadwell Water Company, at their Board of Works in Shadwell, on the 20th of September, 1787, in hopes of getting some redress for my grievance, or over-charge; one of these sages (most probably it might be the Governor) positively told me, that they had sat there 20 years, and had not divided a halfpenny, (these were his express words) which undoubtedly there is a possibility in some sense of being true, for said gentleman might perhaps mean, that they had not in all that time, once split a halfpenny in twain; if that really was his thoughts at the time, I can with great ease give full credit thereto; but on the other hand to suppose that they had not received any manner of interest for their money all that time, must confess my faith is not quite strong enough to down with facts as above laid down, appearing too strong and positive against any such idea.

Interest

Interest did I say, instead of interest, it most certainly must appear very strange, if we apply to facts (at the same time making use of our own reason or judgment) I say it must seem exceeding odd, if they have not received their principal or first costs back into their own hands over and over again in that time, even allowing, that for the greatest part of this period, they served their customers at about one half, or even less than half the price they now charge for this useful article; for it seems these gentlemen have considerably more than doubled their water-rents since I was first a tenant to them, when I paid them no more than ten shillings per year, for several years, as mentioned over and over again several times in the course of this work; for I know them which pay no more than sixteen pounds per year rent, and yet they pay a guinea a year for water; and other families, although very small, who occupy no manner of business which requires water, which also stand at considerably lower rents than what I paid as above, nevertheless they charge these persons one pound four shillings per year for water (should suppose it almost needless to inform my readers, that the reason of our having had this article upon such moderate terms formerly, was owing to an opposition between the Shadwell and West - Ham Water Companies) But when the former got the Works of the latter into their own hands, they then soon began to let us know the odds of it.

But to return, in order to clear up this point, it hath already been made to appear in page 69,
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of this Address, that one Engine of such power as those are, belonging to this same Company, will by working six days in the week, and 14 hours in the day, the year round, raise water sufficient to supply 23050 families, each of them to expend 20 gallons per day one day with another for the whole time, which should suppose is far more than what families in general make use of, consequently is not rated under the mark.

Then let us suppose 23050 families, at ten shillings each per year for water (taking that as being about an average rate,) this in 20 years amounts to £230500 but who can think that they have laid down one half of that sum in first erecting their works, I for my part cannot suppose any such thing, but perhaps they may object and say that they have no such number of customers, perhaps they may not, neither can I pretend to say positively that they have; I can only say as above, that one Engine is capable of supplying so many, this is a point which would be attended with too much labor and difficulty to find out to any degree of nicety, not but what it might be done pretty nearly.

However we may form some kind of a rough guess of the matter, by considering a little the parishes which they supply; and first, St. George's in the East, St. John, Wapping; Shadwell, and Limehouse; these four parishes should suppose that they wholly serve with water; the first of which, as far as I understand, hath full 3000
houses.

houses in it ; but with regard to the other three, I have not had an opportunity of examining into, but undoubtedly this Company extend their works to many other parishes, viz. to Stepney, White-chapel, Spitalfields, Bethnal-Green, and perhaps Aldgate, &c. not that I suppose as they supply the whole of these latter parishes by a good deal, but these affairs will naturally soon appear to a much greater certainty when this business comes before the public.

But there is other matters to be considered, and first we may take notice that at the time that I was told this by one of the above gentlemen, viz. that they had sat there 20 years and had not divided a halfpenny, that they had then been upon the advanced rate of about 50 per cent for full 8 years of the time, which would make some considerable difference in the matter, we may add to this, the number of trades which they hoist up at a fine rate, such as Brewers, Sugar Bakers, Bread-Bakers, Dyers, Publicans, &c. &c. some they run it seems to a pretty penny; I enquired at one Sugar Bakers, and although but a small one, was informed that they make them pay 7 pounds a year for water, and perhaps there is not so many of this calling, Brewers, &c. in any part of the metropolis, as there is in the beat of the Shadwell Water Company, and they tell in well.

These things jointly considered, would venture to appeal to any person or persons of any penetration, whether it is likely that they had not divided

vided a halfpenny in all that time, except in some such sense as above-mentioned, or rather whether it is not more reasonable to believe, that they have regained the first cost laid down, and as much more to it, as intimated above.

I do not know what they may persuade others to, but for my own part I must confess, I cannot tell how, so far to give up my reason, as to adhere to bare unsupported assertions, before plain and positive facts; for unless they can make it appear that there is many weighty expences belonging to such works, that I have not so much as touched upon, their profits must then undoubtedly be very exorbitant and excessive, &c. &c.

I was farther told at the same time and place, and by the same gentleman too, that they were many thousands in debt (he mentioning the particular sum) which must appear at first sight, rather worse than not having divided a halfpenny in the time above mentioned; as it must seem by this that they had not only gained nothing at all, but on the other hand that they had lost a great deal. But these gentlemen were rather unfortunate in this respect being as I humbly conceive not much unlike the elders who accused Susannah with adultery, who when they themselves were strictly and separately examined by Daniel, respecting the fact they differed in a very material point as such were themselves refuted, even so, this gentleman exceed by several thousands what I had the same day been informed by their secretary that they were in

in debt, then how shall we give credit to what they say in such cases, after having detected them in such material error, and it may rather seem that the fault must rest with them as it must otherwise appear very odd, that their principal clerk, when he informed me, that they were in debt, that he should estimate that debt at several thousands less than what it really was; as I should suppose it would be more natural for him rather to exaggerate the case than to diminish it, and methinks it must appear altogether as strange if he should be at a loss of thousands in the knowledge of their accompts, as to their being at this time a good deal involved perhaps may not be much to be wondered at, if we recollect that they had some time before this got the West-Ham Works into their own hands, the purchase of which, undoubtedly would be no trifle. However be it more or less they, seem determined to make their tenants pay it off for them in a short time for having compassed this business, they advance their customers at pleasure, and if any of them dare to complain what is the consequence, why we will cut your water off, and you may help yourselves how you can, or rather as they told me that it would cost me a great deal more to lay it on again by which they seem to rest assured that we must at all events, stoop to them and lay it on again as knowing we cannot live without water, and therefore undoubtedly they do this by way of punishment, as above observed to such as dare to complain, and at the same time
with

with a view to deter others from following their example; thus they enforce submission to whatever they think well to impose. But in future let none regard their high looks and menacing language, but rather be determined to humble their pride, and the business is more than half done.

But if on the other hand we tacitly and tamely submit to such avaricious despots as these, it is hard to judge or say to what lengths their insatiable desires of mammon will lead them thus this great evil will undoubtedly become a growing one and Englishmen by so doing may soon become some of the most abject despicable slaves of any in the universe, as several times intimated before.

Having if I mistake not, laid down all or most of the principal expences attending Water Works, have little more to do than again to endeavour to persuade my fellow sufferers well and truly to examine into the same, and if this proves a just representation of the case, consequently we are much over rated as such, must again attempt to prevail upon them if possible, not to remain inactive but jointly for us to take some effectual method of redressing ourselves.

Not that I have considered every minute particular, such as a small spot of land for erecting an Engine or Engines upon, with room for a reservoir if necessary, &c. &c. nor have I mentioned the keeping such Engines in repair, which undoubtedly continual friction must cause some considerable

considerable wear and tear, consequently there must frequently be something laid out upon them to keep them up. But at the same time such things as these when compared with the extraordinary advantages arising therefrom, appear so trifling as to seem scarcely worth notice.

Here is one rather heavy job, the Shadwell Water Company have had some time back it may be somewhat more than twelve months since, it being if I mistake not, early in the year 1789. I mean their laying down large iron pipes from their works into the bed of the river; I apprehend in order to take up the water occasionally, when at lowest; this of course must have been an expensive piece of business, but what is it when compared to their income supposing this affair to amount to 15 hundred, or 2 thousand pounds, ten thousand a year clears it all off again in less than three months, interest and all; and it hath been already shewn that one Engine will supply water to bring in double, or at least, near double that sum annually (if not suffered to run to waste) at the rates people are charged for water, besides these pipes I suppose will remain an age at least, before they can want new laying again perhaps ages but if I mistake not this job was as weak as it hath been expensive and whoever advised such a measure, should suppose were no conjurers; as not considering that the salt water, often comes as far up the river as Shadwell, or farther, and as it is heavier than fresh water it undoubtedly will sink the lowest by which means their water is not unfrequently

frequently rendered brackish, and consequently is much the worse for washing, not only requiring more soap but more labour withal and at the same time if I mistake not, hath a greater tendency to rot or destroy the linnen that is washed therein than what pure fresh water hath, these are matters that I should suppose every washer woman must be sensible of, if capable of making any observation at all.

But as a farther proof of this matter must beg leave to take notice of another circumstance, which is this, at the house where I at present reside, which house is supplied with water by the Shadwell Company; whenever the servant hath omitted turning it off in proper time and the tub hath happened to run over a little and it hath flowed over the gravel in the garden, when said water hath been dried up again it hath left such a whiteness upon the surface of the gravel; that any one if not blind might very easily perceive, and that to the greatest nicety, how far the water had spread, which whiteness was undoubtedly owing to the saline particles that were therein contained and what were left behind after the pure water was evaporated and fled off again, I have myself, frequently found it so hard as scarcely to be able to wash my hands therein. How far such liquid may be suitable or proper for internal purposes, may be a question most fit for the faculty to decide upon.

As,

As I recollect in my letter which I addressed to the Commissioners of the Court of Requests, page 43, I partly engaged myself, to shew in what respects the gentlemen who compose the Board at the Shadwell Water Works, resemble those well-known animals, called Affes; therefore must beg leave to drop a few words, respecting that matter, in this place, which take as follows:

That these creatures are naturally of a heavy dull stubborn cast, is a fact so well known, as scarcely to need to be mentioned; and let any person of the least penetration, read my letters to these gentlemen, the one dated September 18th, 1787, at page 54, and the other dated June 24th, 1788, at page 57, and after duly considering the same, let them judge whether these gentlemen do not possess the same qualities, in a high degree, otherwise what could have induced them to refuse the offers I then made them, viz. in my first letter, where I proposed allowing them 12 shillings per year, which was far more than what they ought to have charged me, if they had paid any regard to our family being so very small, and of course used but very little water; as hath been sufficiently treated on, and cleared up, in my letter to the Commissioners, as above-mentioned. If any person or persons should wish to see this matter more particularly made out, let them turn to the 20th or 21st page of the aforesaid letter, and read to the middle of the 25th page.

Again, when I attended on them, the 20th of the same month and year, it being two days after

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the date of the first letter, and finding them refractory, and rather than to have had any more trouble with them, I offered to have paid them 15s. per year, and tendered them down the money to have paid the half-year then due: well, and what then could they with any degree of propriety, or reason, refuse this offer, surely not; nevertheless they did refuse it with a witness, telling me that they would not abate me a half-penny; threatening me at the same time with cutting my water off, &c. &c. What could be the cause of such refusal or such treatment, if it was not owing to their possessing in a high degree as above-mentioned, the qualities of that venerable animal. Again in my second letter, I not only proved to them the exorbitance of their charge, but I reasoned and remonstrated with them, and I may farther say, I cautioned them and warned them of the consequences likely to ensue; but I might just as well have bestowed the same labour on so many of the above four-footed brutes; it did not suit with their disposition, to listen to the voice of reason, equity or justice, which you may read at large page 57.

If they would give and take, very well, but that they will not do, they will advance I understand very considerably, viz. to double or treble; or many times as much as that, in some cases, where they meet with persons, that occupy any trade, or trades, which require a quantity more water than what people use in general; or if any one keep a Horse or two, they will whip them up, very handsomely on such occasions; even the poor Publicans it

it seems must pay something extraordinary for pot-washing, &c. But on the other hand, if families are very small, and make use of but very little water, they will not abate them a halfpenny upon that account; by which it is plain, that neither reason, equity, or justice, have much place in their proceedings: my respectable reader, I sincerely beg your pardon, for having detained you so long, in treating upon such worthless subjects.

And I humbly hope that I have before this said enough, not only to convince you, and every one of you, that are not prejudiced against the matter, that I have not only proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, that we are in general charged at very high and excessive rates, by the different Water Companies, for that necessary and useful article, but have at the same time made it to appear that their mode of enforcing submission to their unreasonable demands, at least in the East part of the town, is a matter in itself too humiliating and grating, for one subject, to put up with from another, viz. from his fellow subjects, persons not a whit better than ourselves in any respect, unless it be in this one thing, (which may perhaps be principally owing to their extortion) viz. that they have amassed up greater abundance of this world's goods, than what the far greater part of mankind have done. This I know from well earned experience that the Shadwell Water Company act upon the most arbitrary principles, as any persons possibly can do, excepting only with respect to
life

life and death; or in other words as far as their power will admit. But whether the other Companies fall short in this respect or not, I cannot take upon me positively to say, as not having had any dealings with them, nevertheless by some hints that I have received, have reason to believe that most of them act nearly upon the same plan. But in regard to charge for their water, I am apprehensive that they equal, if not outstrip the above-named Company therein.

Now it remains with you, my fellow denizens of the world, and in this respect fellow-sufferers in this metropolis; whether you will lye inactive, and tamely bend or crouch under your burdens, or whether you will rise up and exert yourselves, like men, in shaking the over and above unreasonable weight from off your shoulders.

Let none weakly or effeminately cry out and say, Ha, we should be very glad to have water, upon more reasonable and equitable terms, but alas, how is this to be done, the water is the different Companies own property, and as they very well know we cannot do without it, therefore we must lye at their mercy, as they will charge just what they please, and we cannot help ourselves.

I say let none be so ignorant of their power, for although we cannot, in a general way of speaking, individually help ourselves, as observed in the former part of this Address, nevertheless as
also

also, there remarked, in a united and collective manner, we may perform it very easily and very effectually too; nay farther, although very few as individuals, can help themselves and their neighbours in this respect, notwithstanding that, there is some gentlemen of such property, that had they spirit and fortitude enough, to set heartily about it, who after having counted up the cost, and made out what is reasonable, just and proper, that we should be rated at; who have it in their power, not only to dictate to the various Water Companies, concerned in these two great cities of London and Westminster, and the suburbs thereunto belonging; but also, absolutely to give laws to them, pointing out in what manner, and after what rates they shall charge, and upon these gentlemen refusing submission thereto; then in such case the other party or parties, viz. the above lawgivers, immediately to erect Works, and when so done, and as fast as they can carry their pipes through the streets, from place to place, that they shall take all, or nearly all, their customers from them; for however inactive, backward, and dispirited most people may be, in engaging in bringing so desirable a reformation forwards, nevertheless there can be no manner of doubt but what they would be ready enough, to embrace the opportunity, when they found that they could be as well supplied, and upon much easier terms withal, with as good water as any of the above Companies can boast of, I say there can be no manner of doubt of this, but what they would be ready enough to drop their old masters, and to embrace

embrace their new ones. It may here be remarked, that if one or two gentlemen have it thus in their power to give laws to such opulent Bodies of people, then how easy would it be, for a number of persons of property jointly to do it.

But some will be ready to object, and say, that in such case, the other Companies would all lower their water to such a pitch, as to ruin any such gentleman, or gentlemen, that should take such measures against them or their interest; if so, I beg leave to observe, that there is ways and means, if I am not much mistaken, to guard against any such catastrophe as this, and to order matters in such way, that these enraged gentry, should only be able in such attempts, to involve themselves farther in destruction and misery. But this is a topic perhaps more proper to be cleared up at a future period, even not until such time as the business is in some forwardness for carrying into execution, as such, shall say no more about it in this place.

To conclude, if I may be thought worthy in any respect, to point out what are the first steps proper to be taken in this affair, I would advise a few persons to call a public meeting, in order to consider whether we are imposed upon or not; and if we find that we are, then, secondly, to consult of the most proper and effectual ways and means of redressing ourselves, and at the same time requesting such that have been any ways singularly ill treated by any of the Water Companies, to step forwards,

forwards, and if said persons could be prevailed upon, to deliver in their various cases, in writing, it might be the better, as by that means we might be enabled to form a judgment upon a greater certainty, of the arbitrary proceedings of, at present, our High and Mighty Lords and Masters, perhaps the greater part of the different Water Companies; thirdly, a select Committee might be chosen, and so to proceed according as exigencies, and the nature of the business might require.

P. S. It is now almost seven weeks since, I sent a duplicate of the former part of this treatise to Mr. Mc I——sh, I have seen him several times in the interim, and he informs me, that he hath laid it before several of the commissioners; but no one of them hath thought well to make any reply thereto; but Mr. Mc I——sh saith, that he can be no way to blame in the matter as he still abides by the same, as he said upon the latter trials, viz. that they have not a power to affix a price upon other peoples property; although at the same time he seems to be no friend to these water gentlemen. He hath now informed me, more particularly, what treatment he hath met with from the Shadwell Water Company, that upon their charging him for water for a house while untenanted that he attended upon them at their board, with a view of obtaining relief from such imposition, but instead of their redressing him, it seems they not only made him pay the water rent for the said

saïd house the space of a full year, as it was empty, but behaved to him after a very insolent, ungentleman like manner, withall this affair is mentioned in page the gift of saïd address, but I did not know the particulars so well when I wrote that part.*

If these gentleman treat persons of property, after such abusive, oppressive, and tyrannical manner, it can be no wonder if they use the generality of their customers that make any complaints to them, like so many dogs.

If appears, if I mistake not, from what Mr. Mc I——th saith, and from the taciturnity of his colleagues in office, that there is no possibility of getting redress, by any other means, than by taking some spirited measures, with them: And if such things as these are not sufficient to excite Englishmen to unite, and to shake off such tyrannical oppressive yoke, I cannot say what will.

Wednesday, July the 7th, 1790.

The only reason I had, for addressing this letter to Mr. Mc I——th in the first instance, is this; viz. three trials out of the four, I had of the kind, were taken before him jointly with some other gentlemen, which I knew not, nay farther, he is the only one of the commissioners living, who had any concern in the business, that I have any personal knowledge of Mr. H——d being since dead, therefore my mentioning him in particular is only out of a kind of necessity, consequently is not imputing any reflection on his person above any others, I have known this gentleman for many years, and always took him for an honest respectable character.